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TO: Senator Rudy Boschwitz

FROM: Ellen Laipson
             Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division

SUBJECT: Iraqi support for terrorism 1980-1982

This memorandum describes information collected from public sources on terrorist activities directly or indirectly attributable to Iraq in the past two years. The groups named here are committed to armed struggle against Israel; alleged Iraqi support for groups organized to oppose the governments in Oman, Iran, and Syria among others is not cited.

The Arab Liberation Front was founded by Iraq in 1968. Iraq, according to numerous press accounts, remains the sole source of financing for the ALF, which has claimed responsibility for a number of terrorist incidents against Israel:

   1) an attack against kibbutz Misgav 'Am on April 7, 1980,

   2) an explosion in a chemical warehouse in Jerusalem on April 12, 1980,

   3) an attack against an Israeli patrol near a Jewish settlement outside Bethlehem on May 12, 1980,

   4) an attempted assassination of Israeli Defense Minister Sharon on July 15, 1980, and

   5) two efforts to enter Israel by motor-driven gliders on March 7, 1981.

The first four of these incidents were reported by Iraqi radio; the fifth by the Washington Post.

A number of other Palestinian splinter organizations are widely
thought to have links with Iraq, but cannot be proven from public sources
to be primarily financed or directed by Iraq. The following are the major
groups in this category.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is headed by
Dr. George Habash, and maintains contacts with a number of Arab govern-
ments. Official trips to Baghdad occurred in January and February, 1980.
On June 27, 1981, the PFLP was reported by the Agence France de Presse in
Beirut to be responsible for an attack on an Athens based maritime agency
allegedly used by Israeli intelligence agents. The attack left two dead
and more than 50 wounded.

The Palestine Liberation Front claimed responsibility for an attack
against Israel launched by balloon. The attempted raid against a settlement
in northern Israel was reported by the Kuwaiti news service.

The 15 May Organization distributed statements in Beirut in August 1981,
claiming responsiblity for attacks against the Israeli diplomatic missions in
Vienna and Athens. The Iraqi radio report also associated the group with an
earlier attack against El Al facilities in Rome. On March 2, 1982, an Israeli
intelligence official disclosed that his government believes this organization
is connected with the bombing of a Greek ship outside Haifa which took place
in December 1981.

There is considerable controversy surrounding a group called El Assifa
(Arabic for Storm), also known as the Abu-Nidal group. After breaking away
from Yasir Arafat's Fatah group in the early seventies over the issue of
negotiations with Israel, Abu Nidal (a code name for Hasan Sabri al-Bana)

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went to Baghdad and received the protection of the Iraqi government for several years, while he mounted terrorist attacks in Syria and Jordan (See the New York Times, September 13, 1981). The Kuwaiti news agency has referred to the Abu-Nidal group as "a pro-Iraqi Palestinian commando movement" (July 29, 1980), as does the Atlanta Constitution, in an article from Beirut on September 17, 1981. Yet other accounts, including the New York Times and the London-based magazine The Middle East, suggest that Abu-Nidal may be turning increasingly to Syria for support.

In the past two years, this group has been associated with at least three incidents:

1) the July 1980 assassination of Israel's commercial attache in Belgium,

2) the May 1981 killing of Viennese city councilman Heinz Nittel,

and 3) the August 1981 attack on a synagogue in Vienna.

Abu Nidal may also have been involved in a September 1981 bombing incident in southern Cyprus against a company representing the Israeli shipping line Zim.